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# THE SLÖJD IN THE SERVICE OF THE SCHOOL

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Monograph

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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The essay that follows has been translated, with the sanction of Mr. Salomon, from an article that appeared in German under the title : *Der Slöjd im Dienste der Schule, Arbeiterfreund, Heft 3., Jahrg. 1886*, and was afterward issued in pamphlet form. The English translation, it is perhaps hardly necessary to state, has been made to follow as closely as possible the letter of the original. If deviations occur they are such as were judged necessary in the change of idiom, but are, it is hoped, only in form and not in sense. The Swedish word *Slöjd* has been retained with its proper orthography ; there is no good reason apparent why an attempt should either be made to translate it, or to write for it its phonetic equivalent. It has, by this time, surely acquired the right to be considered a proper lexicographical element of English ; the more so, as there is no single word in the language to express the idea it unmistakably conveys. It is only necessary to bear in mind, once for all, that in its pronunciation öf is practically equivalent to the English oi.

W. H. C.

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## The Slöjd in the Service of the School.

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"Public education is the real vital question of our time." If the term winged is to be applied to any words of Fichte's then surely is this entitled to be reckoned among them ; in the sense, namely, that it is true, not only at a special moment, but for all times and circumstances.

Much is said of "great questions," but, strangely enough, the speaker has often in view only a reform of the taxes or the organization of the army ; questions indeed weighty, but always of more or less incidental importance. Only one question can be called in the full sense of the word great, a vital question not for one, but for all time ; that is the question of education. If the real reasons for phenomena and their mutual relationship in religion, society, or politics are observed, or, perhaps better stated, are inquired into, it will be found, beyond a doubt, that every occurrence of this character either runs out into a question of education, or through such a question receives its final solution. And why ? Wholly, as a matter of course, because the future belongs to the young, and every development arrived at through education will sooner or later impress its stamp upon the thought, energy and action of the coming generation. That the teacher, the educator *ex professo*, should cherish such a view of the importance of his labor is, indeed, less strange, but those who do not stand in close relationship to the school, also share this idea. The history of our day shows distinctly that the arrangement of instruction within purely practical limits forces itself more and more into the foreground, and that

the men who direct the affairs of state have an eye thoroughly open to the significance of the school in modern civil society. They well know that the political party that holds power over the educational institutions and makes them the expression of its own ideas has to a certain extent placed itself even in possession of the future. They know that it is less, perhaps, in societies and meetings than it is in the school where the views of coming generations must be formed. Belgium, and possibly also Austria, under the banner of Catholic reaction, and France under that of radicalism and free-thought, show plainly enough what a weighty factor the educational question has become at the present day in the life of the state.

He, too, who only follows such questions with a passive interest cannot help but remark that in our day much is going forward in the school; that the whole system of instruction, public as well as private, is in a sort of process of fermentation. Out of very different camps march storming parties against existing forms. New tasks are allotted to the school; new subjects of instruction, or, at least some considered new, are defended. One will exclude from the curriculum the one or the other branch of study; another will introduce something new. Only in one point does there appear to be tolerable unanimity, namely, in this, that something must be done lest the school, the higher as well as the lower, shall gradually run into a *cul-de-sac*; or perhaps somewhat more mildly expressed, the young, and through them society, must be assured a sufficient recompense for the time and labor which the school finds itself obliged to lay claim to for its purposes.

One of these questions, and certainly not the one least capable of attracting to itself the attention of the public, is the *Slöjd*, physical labor in the service of the school. It is beyond doubt a great error to regard this particular educational question, which is coming more and more into

the foreground, in any other manner than in connection with other contemporary phenomena in the field of pedagogy. By means of its material nature and condition, if one can so use the term; because of results from certain points of view already visible, the *Slöjd*, perhaps in a higher degree than any other existing or suggested branch of instruction, has been able to attract attention and a warm enduring interest, and this by no means in the lowest degree among those who have no connection with the school. This is, without a doubt, the condition of things, but just here one must take care, from a pedagogical standpoint, not to give to this movement for *Slöjd* instruction another significance than with right belongs to it. It is, namely—and the manner of its appearance in different countries proves this point—nothing else than a definite side of the universal reform of instruction, and is, accordingly, not to be considered or treated in any other way. That this point should be established is of decisive weight; for otherwise it might easily come about that the centre of gravity of the question might be shifted, and it would, consequently, be less to the purpose to place the *Slöjd* in the service of the school, than the school in the service of the *Slöjd*.

In the discussion of these opposing points it cannot be strongly enough emphasized that the present movement for *Slöjd* instruction is never to be viewed in the same light with a similar effort tending in the same general direction. As a whole, this agitation for *Slöjd* instruction is divided, into two different movements, which, although confused by superficial observers, in reality have nothing in common except the name. The one is of purely national-economical significance, in that it is based upon the fact that domestic industry is decreasing more and more, and sets itself the task of taking measures to teach the rural population, especially fitting *Slöjd* labors for home occupation, whose products may be applied either in the

house itself, or may serve directly for sale. This *Slöjd* movement sees in the school the means for extending *Slöjd* skill. The universal and real object of the school to be an educational institution for the training of its pupils must, in accordance with this movement, retire into the background before the design to give to the pupil the requisite skill to prepare certain objects destined either for sale, or for domestic use. In the choice of such labors, then, the decision must be made from points of view quite other than pedagogical. It can neither be taken into consideration, nor should it be, whether the kind of labor, or the method of instruction employed are of a character to influence profitably the education of the child. The objects produced become the essential part; the worker himself, on the other hand, is an incidental part. The support of domestic industry is the solution of the problem, and the most powerful factor thereto, the school, is withdrawn from its actual, definite task and compelled to serve purposes foreign to it.

It is wholly different with the other movement that desires to place the *Slöjd* in the service of the school. Manual labor arranged on pedagogical principles is, in many respects, an extremely efficient means for the education of children. It desires, therefore, to introduce the *Slöjd* into the school, not for the furtherance of the *Slöjd*, but because it believes that the school, by means of this branch of study, will exert an influence, in a manner more perfect and as [many-sided as is possible, upon the development of its pupils. Not the products of labor, but the laborers themselves are, according to this idea, the most important part. Whether the objects produced during instruction have a higher or lower market value; whether the children shall in the future perform the same labors, or not; whether the kinds of *Slöjd* with which the pupil is occupied in school are the best fitted for trade and home occupation—all these; and other points of view, are but

incidental. They are as little to be taken into consideration in the arrangement of instruction as though, for instance, in the adoption of a school-book its practicability after the completion of school should be considered; or as if the black-boards, ruled writing-books, and copies should be removed from the school-room because the children must, in the future get along without their aid. The kinds of *Slöjd* and their methodical arrangement are here only means and must be so regarded. They have, so far as the school is concerned, in themselves no other right, save in the measure they are fitted to perform the especial educational purposes to the attainment of which the school applies them; and the educational value that they have is the only standard by which to judge them.

A not unimportant part of the opposition, which—perhaps less in Sweden than in other countries—has arisen against the introduction of the *Slöjd* into the school, is, without a doubt, based upon a very explicable confusion of these two movements, so different in means and purpose, on the part of such teachers as stand aloof from the movement. Many a teacher, perfectly well cognizant of the difficulties met with in carrying out, even approximately, the many and weighty requirements that are the specific task of the school, perhaps mistakenly believes that *Slöjd* instruction will necessarily decrease the efficiency of the school and will turn it aside into directions foreign to its educational aims. It is not strange that he will not give his co-operation if he, with all respect for the advantages of domestic industry, still doubts whether it is right to lead the school away from its own high purpose on to foreign ground, however worthy of attention the same may be. The opposition, or, at least, the impassiveness toward the question of *Slöjd* instruction in which teachers often persist, is based, accordingly, to no slight degree upon a false conception of its real meaning.

What educational signification has, then, the *Slöjd*, and what are the purposes that may be claimed for it, if it enters into the service of the school? The answer to this is naturally to be stated differently, according as the one concerned represents this or that pedagogical point of view. The disciples of Herbart will intensify the views and conceptions which the course of instruction treats by means of the self-dependence of the pupil. From this stand-point manual labor will be a new bond to unite concentrically the different courses of instruction, without its being necessary on this account to renounce the fruits that *Slöjd* instruction produces in and by itself. The supporters of the pedagogical system of Fröbel desire, in so far as they follow out the consequences of the teachings of their master, to introduce into the actual school, in this direction too, the method of the kindergarten, where occupations form the real foundation of education and instruction. Others, by whom the difference between primary and technical educational institutions is not clearly enough accentuated, desire that the *Slöjd* shall assume in the school the form of a kind of preparatory mechanical education, in which the trades shall be represented as much as possible. Others, again,—and most of those connected with the school who have gone to the heart of the matter belong, certainly, to them—see in the *Slöjd* arranged according to pedagogical principles, an efficient educational means of high significance. They know and acknowledge that manual labor rightly arranged and rightly conducted is capable of awakening and strengthening in children certain qualities of unconditional value, not only for the school, but also, and before all else, for life. What they desire to attain by means of the *Slöjd* is, accordingly,—the expression may, after all, not be understood by those who are able to grasp this idea from the one side only—a formal education; and all may be tolerably well convinced that principally in this character-

istic, as an efficient educational means, the *Slöjd* will later on be able to conquer its rightful place in the curriculum of the school.

The aim of education is, beyond question, to bring about a development as many-sided as possible. The pedagogical value of a subject of instruction or practise easily shows, when viewed in connection with other subjects, to what degree it can assist in this development. Since, in consequence of the many-sidedness of the qualities and powers which the educator has to regard, no subject alone is capable of taking into consideration all sides of the formal education, such a choice of the different educational means must naturally be sought that they shall mutually supplement each other and together form a whole. If, then, a new subject, as such an educational means, is to be introduced into the school, then it is necessary to inquire what side of the development it can and must promote; as well as whether from it is to be expected a complete educational result. If it is then shown that this side had already sufficient attention, then the suggested subject is, in this respect, superfluous. If the contrary is true, it is to be and must be given place with the other subjects, unless the effort for a harmonious education is to be with the educator only a meaningless catch-word. The history of the introduction of drawing and gymnastics into the school furnishes pertinent examples on this point.

The value of the *Slöjd* as an educational means is, comparatively speaking, many-sided. Beside the skill to turn the hand to useful labor, which is taught the children to their undeniable advantage, it is also capable, in other ways of assisting to a notable extent in the development of various powers and qualities valuable in after life. Among these are to be mentioned love for labor, and, as a direct consequence, industry and persistence. Self-reliance, exactness and attentiveness are other characteristics that are demanded in the *Slöjd*, and, accordingly, also

attain development through it. That the *Slöjd*, like drawing, helps also to sharpen the eye and to educate the sense of form is obvious. Finally, as an object of *Slöjd* instruction may also be cited that through it the pupil will be inspired with a respect for manual labor; as well as that the school through it will be better able to further the so necessary physical education than has heretofore been the case. On both these last points of view a few words are in place.

Respect for manual labor! Yes. Who does not in our day entertain at least a theoretical respect for manual labor and for the laborer himself; yet, be it incidentally remarked, less for them as individuals, than as members of the whole class, that in and with the labor unions begins to conquer for itself a certain significance, and consequently must, with other factors, be taken into account. But how is it, then, in reality, with this "respect"? How many fathers of the more educated class allow their sons, without its being positively necessary, to become mechanics, or to devote themselves otherwise to manual work? And is there not to be found among the laborers themselves the wish that their children may become something "better," that is, be reckoned as belonging to another class? This is not to be explained by the supposition that the more theoretical occupations usually offer to those who follow them greater pecuniary advantages than those which, for example, the mechanic or the skilled workman in a manufactory can obtain, for this is, by no means, always the case. On the contrary, the reverse comes often enough to pass; an experience that many, who have sacrificed for their studies much time and money, have had to their own sorrow. No; the true reason is that this strong prejudice is, perhaps, inherited from the times that regarded manual labor as an unworthy occupation for the free citizen, and therefore paid to it less respect than to another kind of activity. And our educational institutions, the lower as

well as the higher, have hitherto surely not done much to counteract this harmful prejudice, but, on the contrary, have possibly contributed to strengthen it. From the fact that they almost exclusively lay weight only upon theoretical knowledge and aristocratically avoid occupying themselves with manual labor, they have instilled into their pupils, generation after generation, the conviction that this labor is, in reality, of only subordinate worth. It is, then, not to be wondered at that these pupils when they come out into active life imagine that the extolled "education," with which they have been made happy, is connected, in no immaterial degree, with an emancipation from manual labor, according to the general significance of this word. Surely, it is not too soon for the school to awaken to a knowledge of what it has, in this respect, on its conscience, and to endeavor to some extent to make good that which it has neglected. Too many lives are wasted through the imperfect conceptions imbibed during development; and they may rightly charge the school that it has made them at least to a certain extent, what they have become. Many a youth, who, perhaps, could have been a skillful mechanic or an able agriculturist, the school, with its one-sided prejudice for theoretical occupations, has led away to another field for which he was not fitted, to his own loss and to the detriment of society. Precisely in our time, when social questions crowd themselves so irresistibly into the foreground and demand solution, when one class is incited against the other, it is surely not of immaterial significance if the school, where the future ideas of life are fostered, does not endeavor to inculcate, not only through the word, but also in very deed, the ethical value of all honorable labor, be it of the body or of the hand. For there is truth in the saying of Rousseau that "children easily forget what one says or has said to them, but not what one does or has done to them."

Another element of the *Slöjd* in the service of the school

is its value for physical development; in that, rightly arranged, it is able to provide a highly necessary corrective against the great amount of sitting still, as well on the school-form, as during study at home. It is able, also, to assist directly in strengthening the physical forces. Professor Axel Key, the renowned Swedish scholar, who, as a member of the Instruction Commission established by the government, not long since made very complete investigations concerning the hygenic conditions of the school, makes in the detailed report that has recently appeared, the following observations concerning the illnesses that too much sitting still during the years of development can cause: "It must, therefore, be for the school an object of the greatest care that it does not compel the children to sit still during the day longer than is absolutely necessary for the satisfaction of the due demands of school instruction; as, also, that the disadvantageous effect of this unavoidable, and, under all circumstances, too long sitting still that the school must require, be as much as possible held in balance by diligently exercised movements of the body. The half-hour gymnastic exercise, once a day, that is now introduced into the higher institutions of learning, may accomplish that which it is able, but it is very far from filling the need." If the school once clearly realizes its duty and pays the necessary attention to physical development for the promotion of bodily health, then it will certainly find in manual labor a means, that together with gymnastics and games of motion, will show itself of extraordinary worth.

## II.

After these suggestions as to the pedagogical purpose of *Slöjd* instruction in the school, it must also be shown in what manner it must be arranged in order to attain this result. To him who does not console himself, as an excuse for aimlessly groping about, with the somewhat doubtful sentence, "that all ways lead to Rome," it will

be a matter of course that the attainment of a definite object, be it in this or another field, always presupposes a completely systematized manner of procedure with the end in view. Just as really systematic instruction in history must be pursued in quite a different manner than if one is drudging for examination, just so would it be a great error to believe that the mere occupation of the children with *Slöjd*, in the one way or the other, is sufficient to attain the stated educational goal to which manual labor without a doubt is capable of leading. But it is not so. By kinds of *Slöjd* in the exercise of which only a small number of tools and manipulations are made use of, a universal dexterity of hand cannot, in the remotest degree, be attained. Never will the child acquire a love for labor, and never will it be led to attentiveness and industry by means of occupations that offer but little variety, and, accordingly, can be executed in a purely mechanical manner. Self-reliance will never be developed, if the teacher during instruction personally lays hand upon the work, or, as happens not at all infrequently, even does the essential part of it himself. One will never become accustomed to exactness by labor that cannot be strictly carried out on a level with the child, nor if the teacher carelessly approves badly executed work. Eye and sense of form cannot be trained, at least to an essential extent, by straight-lined models. Never will the children be imbued with a respect for true manual labor, if they are only allowed to occupy themselves with the production of objects of ornament. By this means, on the contrary, is fostered a feeling of superiority over ruder productions, which, if they have not by their glitter the property of attracting the superficial observer, are very soon considered simple and of less value. And, finally, physical health will never be furthered, nor the so often and clearly shown consequences of too long sitting still during the years of development, be counteracted by in-

viting the child under the alluring name of “*Slöjd* instruction” to sit still several hours more during the week. No. Whether instruction concerns the *Slöjd* or another branch, the arrangement adopted must always have a definite relation to the ends which it is desired to attain.

That which in the arrangement of such instruction must be primarily an object of consideration is whether this instruction must comprehend at the same time several branches of *Slöjd*, or whether the development that is aimed at by the instruction can just as well be attained by the use of only one kind of *Slöjd*. Should the last be the case, then weighty reasons must surely exist for a concentration of the instruction in question. It is not to be overlooked that every kind of *Slöjd* should be regarded as an independent branch; and since the curricula in general do not suffer from a lack of subjects of instruction it is, indeed, scarcely to be regarded as a thing desirable to burden them with a number of additional branches, so that the school would thus suffer not only from “much reading,” but also from “much *Slöjd*.” If in addition to this is considered the fact that in every case only a comparatively small number of hours can be appointed for *Slöjd* instruction and these do not easily bear dividing up, and that the use of several kinds of *Slöjd* must always make greater demands upon the teacher and call for more costly equipments than when only one such subject is in use, then—and this is to be emphasized as of especial weight—purely practical reasons should decide whether the *one* kind of *Slöjd* chosen is really capable of bringing about the *same* development as the use of several.

But, it will be replied, this pursuit of only *one* branch of labor, where there is such an abundant choice, leads to one-sidedness, which must be unconditionally bad. Or are there not past, present, or, possibly, conceivable arrangements right in the domain of the school, that viewed from a special point of view might be stamped as imper-

fect? To have too few hours daily for instruction is faulty, for thereby too little is accomplished; but to have too many is also incorrect because thereby is occasioned an over-exertion of strength.

Similar observations can also be made against short and long tasks. To occupy the children only with a few branches of instruction is considered wrong, because the field of knowledge is thereby limited; to have too many is also wrong, for thereby they will only get a smattering of all. Long vacations take away too much time; short ones, on the contrary, do not provide sufficient rest after the exertions of the semester. The employment of class teachers is faulty, for one person cannot always be so far master of the different branches that he can teach them with good results; but against the system of special teachers, on the other hand, from the pedagogical point of view is applied the proverb: "Too many cooks spoil the broth." Yes; the school itself is even considered unnecessary, because it hinders the home from fulfilling its duties toward the children in education and instruction; if, however, the school were taken away and, later on, the parents, free from all harmful restraints, were themselves allowed to exercise these, their "dearest rights," it would still be doubtful whether this state of affairs would give less cause for criticism than present conditions.

Accordingly,—in order to come back again to the point at issue—one-sidedness, in the meaning conceived above, is really an error. Its opposite, many-sidedness, is no less an error, and in this respect, as, indeed, in all others, it is necessary, less to make sure of an element of absolute value, against which no comments could be made and no catch-word could be used, than to choose the relatively best, against which the fewest objections are made.

The simultaneous employment of several kinds of *Slöjd* has exactly the same bearing as the employment of several text-books for a branch of study at a certain age.

Both, the kind of *Slöjd*, as well as the text-book, are *means* of instruction, not *ends* of instruction. The kind of *Slöjd* is a means by which a certain development is desired to be attained in children; the text-book is regarded as a means to impart and to fix certain knowledge. If, then, one-sidedness is an error and its opposite ‘more-sidedness’ or ‘many-sidedness,’ is something meritorious, then it ought to be wholly consistent if, to avoid this defect, there should be used several, indeed perhaps many, school-books simultaneously. To the pupil the opportunity would then be given to learn the views and conceptions that different authors have of a subject. He, however, who knows from experience what great confusion the simultaneous use of even two different text-books for one branch of study can cause would rather bear the reproach of one-sidedness than venture upon doubtful experiments with many-sidedness, and to desire by this means to gain glory.

Do not, however, let this desire, i. e., the instruction here in question, as is unfortunately often the case, be misunderstood or misinterpreted. It is certainly not meant that children should be allowed to occupy themselves during the whole school time with only a single kind of *Slöjd*, and that all others be excluded. Such a design is simply nonsensical, for the reason that one would certainly seek in vain for a kind of *Slöjd* that would be suitable as a means of development for all ages. So, for instance, the six-year old child does not have control over the same forces as does the youth in the higher classes of the school. That which is suitable for one stadium can, therefore, be too easy or too difficult for another. If, accordingly, it is said that *Slöjd* in wood is the labor best fitted for the purposes of the school and is thus alone to be employed, then, as a matter of course, it is only meant that this is the case at a certain age—here it is asserted of those pupils who begin at eleven years of age. Yet the fact must not be overlooked that this is an age always notably inconstant;

for, as regards physical powers, different children are usually differently developed. A child brought up in the country is, in general, stronger than a child of the same age that grows up in the city. The boy is, in most cases, stronger than the girl; to which is still to be added that individual differences also occur.

When *Slöjd* in wood is mentioned it is also of weight to direct attention to another misunderstanding that very often occurs, namely, that this kind of *Slöjd*, or, at least a part of it, *Slöjd* in cabinet-work, is often confounded with professional cabinet-making. In consequence of the confusion of two such wholly different kinds of labor, one occasionally hears expressions like this: "Since all cannot become cabinet-makers, handicrafts other than cabinet-making should also be provided in the public school." Or, "A cabinet-maker who has learned his trade is naturally better able to give instruction in it, than a public school-teacher." Or, "If a teacher in so and so many weeks can be made a mechanic, then a skilled mechanic in the same time can, indeed, also become a teacher," etc. This confusion of ideas that has already caused not a few practical difficulties is, it is true, not inexplicable, yet, on nearer consideration it is wholly without foundation in fact. *Slöjd* in wood comprehends, in its general signification, *Slöjd* in cabinet-work, *Slöjd* in turning, and *Slöjd* in wood carving. As concerns *Slöjd* in cabinet-work, especially, it has with cabinet-making little else in common than that both use the same material, wood, and that this use occurs in both partly by means of the same, partly by means of similar tools. They differ, on the other hand, in several weighty respects. While in industrial cabinet-making one is concerned with the production of relatively larger objects, as furniture, doors, window cornices, pieces of household furniture, and so forth, smaller objects fall to the province of the *Slöjd*, as, for instance, house and agricultural implements and parts of them. The head of a rake, a pen-

holder, a spoon, a key-tag and other similar objects are made by the *Slöjd* worker, but never by the cabinet-maker, at least not in the exercise of his handicraft. In *Slöjd* in cabinet-work, as is well known, the knife is the most important and the most used tool. A *Slöjd* worker without a knife is almost like a rider without a horse. In industrial cabinet-making, on the contrary, the knife does not occur as a tool at all, and a cabinet-maker is usually so little accustomed to manipulate it that if he, for instance, wishes to sharpen his lead-pencil, he, in most cases, seizes his principal weapon, the chisel. There are, also, other tools, as, for instance, the gouge, or the adze, that find application, in the *Slöjd*, but never in cabinet-making.

Further, another material difference between the *Slöjd* and the trade lies in the fact that while in industrial production there exists a division of labor, extended according to circumstances, the *Slöjd* worker, on the contrary, executes his labor entirely with his own hand. The individual mechanic can often enough pride himself upon his labor no further than that he has himself done a small part of it; the *Slöjd* worker, on the other hand, can exhibit with pride the fruit of his own labor. The first, regarded as a producer, is a fraction whose denominator depends upon the number of co-laborers; the other is in himself a unit.

In a comparison between the kinds of *Slöjd*, the causes that determine the preponderance in the scale of *Slöjd* in wood as a means of development most fitting for the age in question are many. *Slöjd* in wood, or, at least, that part of it comprehended in *Slöjd* in cabinet-work and *Slöjd* in turning, possesses, as experience has unconditionally shown, the power to attract in a high degree the interest of the worker; so that even where *Slöjd* instruction is not obligatory children do not neglect, except in extreme cases, to participate in it. By means of this kind of *Slöjd* the pupils, even as beginners, are able to produce

a labor product wholly capable of utilization, in that a sort of labor, useful in a variety of ways and fitting for different circumstances, falls within its sphere. Further, since these labors must be carried out with system and exactness, with neatness and nicety, they are capable—and this in no immaterial way—of developing in pupils precisely these qualities. Again, in *Slöjd* in wood, since, in the choice of preliminaries, the education of the sense of form can also be taken into consideration, there are to be found from an elementary stand-point, all the foundations for an æsthetic development.

*Slöjd* in wood, with its many exercises of different degrees of difficulty, also corresponds with the physical powers of the workers. As concerns the latter, *Slöjd* in cabinet-work offers an excellent counterpoise to sitting still, and, if arranged in a methodical manner, is capable, like gymnastics and games, of contributing to the strength of the body and a gradual development of its powers. In this respect, it may be further asserted that just here in *Slöjd* in cabinet-work, is opportunity found to have the pupil use the principal tools alternately with the right and the left hand; in which process the work with both hands is less to be considered than that, during the labor, the muscles of both sides are uniformly made use of, as is the case in gymnastics and fencing. From this point of view “one-sidedness” is, without a doubt, to be considered an objectionable thing.

Another, and when it concerns a subject of instruction, not insignificant advantage in the kind of *Slöjd* in question is that it is well fitted for methodical arrangement. There can thus, after the necessary investigations and preliminary labors have been made, be set up a series of wooden models, in which the accompanying exercises proceed by degrees; from easy to difficult, from simple to complex. This fact is of importance; because a kind of labor can thus be first placed in the service of the school and made

use of for its purposes when it is capable of being subordinated to the laws that didactics recognizes as universally binding. Finally, it must not remain unnoticed that *Slöjd* in wood requires a number of tools and gives an opportunity for many different manipulations, in consequence of which it, perhaps, before every other kind of *Slöjd*, is best fitted to give at least a relatively universal skillfulness of hand. The more tools and manipulations a kind of *Slöjd* requires, the greater is the education of the hand that is able to carry it out. This is a matter of course; just, as viewed from the same stand-point, it is an advantage if the pupil, in the execution of a task, is allowed to make use of as many tools and manipulations as possible. The criticism that is not seldom made by so-called "practical" persons against the *Slöjd* pursued for pedagogical purposes, that the object could be prepared much more easily and quickly without the use of this number of tools is, accordingly, irrelevant. It should be placed in the same category with the charge against a teacher of gymnastics, who, in certain exercises should direct jumping over obstacles, when the pupils could have gone their way much more easily without them. Such and similar remarks only show that the critic regards the *Slöjd* from points of view other than purely pedagogical, and that he places the finished work and its sale value higher than the development that the pupil has acquired during the work.

Concerning *Slöjd* in wood it was previously stated that it comprised within itself as kinds of *Slöjd*, partly *Slöjd* in cabinet-work, partly *Slöjd* in wood carving and turning. On a nearer examination it will, however, be found that it is in reality the one first named, *Slöjd* in cabinet-work, that is perfectly capable of fulfilling the above mentioned demands for a manual labor applicable as a means of education; neither turning nor wood carving answer in themselves to the demands that must necessarily be made of them. Many friends of *Slöjd* instruction have, as far as

wood carving is concerned, overlooked just this point and consequently have allowed this kind of *Slöjd* to occupy a place in instruction that ought by no means to fall to its share. It may, perhaps, be here in place to enter briefly into some of the most essential, but not, however, weighty reasons, that are generally advanced to prove the usefulness of wood carving as a principal branch of instruction in the school.

It is at the outset claimed that wood carving is of especially important significance for the education of the æsthetic sense, and that, therefore, without regard to its manifest faults, this kind of *Slöjd* should be diligently pursued. Against this the following is to be said. Wood carving may be, indeed, of incontestable importance for the education of the sense of beauty, but from this by no means follows that this is the case precisely at this particular stage. Such a conclusion is just as unwarranted as if, for instance, we should say that because the theory of functions is of great importance for the development of mathematical conceptions, it must precede in the school, instruction in arithmetic and geometry. Such a proceeding were foolish, and it would be just as unreasonable to make use of wood carving as an æsthetic educational means at a stage where it does not belong. If this æsthetical development shall be something other than an empty catch-word, then one must necessarily begin with the foundation ; that is, the child must, in the first place, be accustomed to perform every labor with order and exactness, and it must be made intelligible to him that it is a peremptory condition only to regard a thing beautiful when it is well executed, and that, therefore, an object carelessly made, be it decorated with as many ornaments as it will, is and must be ugly. Experience shows distinctly that if one really wishes, in complete seriousness, to develop the sense of the beautiful, one must proceed precisely in this way. In schools where it is overlooked that ornamentation always belongs to a last

stadium, that it should crown the labor and not be the starting point, and where one begins early with wood carvings, work is, on account of bad execution, very often anything else but tasteful. He must be truly sanguine who will imagine or cause others to imagine that such bunglings, in the execution of which form and composition pass wholly into the background before ornamentation, can work to the advantage of an æsthetic education. May not these superficialities, which often appear to have no other purpose than to attract the eye and to divert attention from the details of execution, on the contrary instil into the pupils a wholly false idea of the nature of the beautiful? Might not the foundation, thereby be laid for a superficiality of observation, which, to a certain degree, might act injuriously upon the domain of the purely moral, in that the young would be systematically led to lay greater weight upon appearing than upon really being?

Another reason that it is customary to bring forward when the question has to do with giving to wood carving a dominating place in *Slöjd* instruction, is that such labors are better fitted for home occupation than those that are included within the province of *Slöjd* in cabinet-work; and since the school ought to work for after life, the pupils should perform precisely such labors as they can later carry out independently during and after the time for going to school. This reason, too, as can easily be shown, has only an apparent value. In the first place, the *Slöjd*, regarded as a means of education, has far higher and weightier purposes than to serve only for an amusement in leisure hours. Several of these purposes have been previously indicated. If, in order to promote home occupation, wood carving should be favored in the school above *Slöjd* in cabinet-work, with the notion that it would be easier to find room in the house for a wood carver's table than for a carpenter's bench, it would manifestly have the same significance as if in the school in instruction in gymnastics

—which, indeed, also has physical development for its material aim—the gymnastic appointments should be excluded because the pupils have no opportunity at home to place such appliances, and, accordingly, could not execute there the motions exercised in the school. A pedagogically educated gymnast, however, could scarcely entertain such a view. On the contrary he might say that precisely because the home can probably not provide such apparatus, without which a satisfactory advantage from gymnastics is not to be expected, the school must give its pupils opportunity to make use of the same in the appointed exercises. It is the same, too, with the employment of cabinet-making in the service of the school. So far from its being a fact that the difficulty—a difficulty, moreover, more apparent than real—of procuring at home the tools necessary for the pursuit of this kind of *Slöjd* should compel the school to throw its weight upon wood carving, which, from several points of view, is less fitting; the absolutely opposite mode of thought is, on the contrary, the right one. One must, indeed, conclude as follows: *Slöjd* in cabinet-making, but not in wood carving, is the most fitting kind of labor for the development of the child. Children might conceivably be able to occupy themselves at home with no other *Slöjd* in wood than wood carving; accordingly the school, if it can, must choose *Slöjd* in cabinet-making for its pupils. Moreover, they who have their eyes upon what a *Slöjd*, rightly pursued, can and must accomplish would scarcely recognize wood carving as an especially fitting household labor. The evil consequences of too long sitting still during development have been so often set forth that it is universally considered desirable to obviate it to the greatest extent possible. Can, then, a *Slöjd* that is exercised sitting, and that, besides, must apparently overtax the eyes, be really pronounced a good domestic labor? Are not pupils, as well in the school as during household tasks, already obliged

to sit still enough? Only one answer to these questions is possible.

But even on the assumption that wood-carving is an excellent home occupation one ought, nevertheless, by no means to draw the conclusion that the school should practice it and in order to make way for it should neglect genuine educational ends. Everything should have its true place and its proper time. It is with wood-carving as with many feminine decorative labors. Simple crotchet-work or art embroidery, if the necessary conditions are at hand, can be learned very quickly. The school does not need to concern itself about them. Let it confine itself to its own task, namely to this, to lay the foundation. Then will the kind of labor which, from the one point of view or the other, is best fitting for "life" be easily taken up when the time has come for it. Let the endeavor also be made that, at the expense of that which to-day may be useful for the development of the child, that is pursued which *possibly* may be serviceable to-morrow. Every day has its own care. This may be considered for all educational instruction, whatever branch it may concern, a correct fundamental principle.

If, furthermore, one will go somewhat nearer to the heart of the question, he will find that it is in a high degree doubtful whether the school by the introduction of this household labor that is suggested will really derive advantage from that from which it proposes to derive advantage, especially if, as has, indeed, been recommended, this home occupation should be made obligatory. Has, then, an extended experience not shown, alas, more than sufficiently, that the text-books and occupations of the school in no way become, *in general*, so attractive to the pupils that they, after their entrance into active life, choose precisely those for amusement in leisure hours? Might not one, on the contrary, assume with a very great degree of probability that if the school wishes to deter the

children from a certain occupation it needs only to compel them to practise it as much as possible, during the school period? The effect of the operation of this principle will certainly never be absent.

Much might still be added to the thoughts just expressed, but since this essay has already become more comprehensive than was originally intended it is plainly time to close. A further element might still, however, be touched upon, because it is indisputably the weightiest where educational instruction is concerned, be it in *Slöjd* or in another department. This element is the teacher. As I have earlier intimated that nearly all questions run out into a question of education or are solved by it, in the same manner might every system of instruction, or the method derived from it, be said to run out into the personality of the teacher. System and method are in themselves only empty forms; to the teacher it is reserved to breathe into them the life-bringing spirit. To give the most admirable method to a bad teacher would be like placing a good sword in the hand of an inexperienced fighter. In the strife over different conceptions and over a different manner of proceeding let this not be left out of sight, and let one, at the same time, always remember that as the teacher, so is also the school.

## APPENDIX.

The following exposition of the aim, method and means of Slöjd instruction is the reprint of a pamphlet issued in English, by the Normal School at Nääs.

### A. AIM OF THE INSTRUCTION.

Whilst the elementary schools prepare the children *indirectly* for life, the chief aim of the teaching of Slöjd is to give the pupils formal instruction, that is, to develop their mental and physical powers. It has also for its material and practical aim the acquisition of general dexterity of hand.

This formal education which Slöjd has in view aims principally at instilling a taste for and love of work in general ; inspiring respect for rough, honest bodily labour; training in habits of order, exactness, cleanliness and neatness ; accustoming to attention, industry and perseverance ; promoting the development of the physical powers ; training the eye and sense of form.

### B. THE METHOD AND MEANS OF INSTRUCTION.

#### I. General principles.

Attendance at Slöjd instruction should be voluntary on the part of the pupils. In order to insure this the work must fulfill the following conditions :

1. It must be useful.
2. It must not require fatiguing preparatory exercises in the use of the various tools.
3. It must afford variety.
4. It must be capable of being carried out by the pupils themselves.
5. It must be *real* work, not play.
6. It must not be so called knick-knacks, that is, articles of luxury.
7. It must become the property of the pupil.
8. It must correspond with the capabilities of the pupils.

9. It must be of such a nature that it can be completed with exactness.
10. It must admit of neatness and cleanliness.
11. It must exercise the thinking powers and not be purely mechanical.
12. It must strengthen and develop the bodily powers.
13. It must assist in developing the sense of form.
14. It must allow of the use of numerous manipulations and various tools.

## II. The teacher.

1. The instruction must be given by a trained teacher, if possible by the same teacher who instructs in intellectual subjects.

2. The teacher should conduct, superintend and control the work ; but guard against directly putting his hand to it.

## III. The age of the pupil.

In order to follow with advantage the course of instruction the pupil ought to have reached that stage of development usually attained at the age of eleven.

## IV. Branches of instruction.

The simultaneous employment of several different kinds of Slöjd acts detrimentally for the following reasons :

A sufficient number of subjects are already taught in the school and every different branch of Slöjd is a subject in itself;

The time to be devoted to this work is short and limited;

By different kinds of work the interest of the pupils would be easily diverted,—therefore the instruction in Slöjd should be confined to one branch.

For the above mentioned standard of age *wood-slöjd* is the most suitable. It includes carpentry, turnery and wood-carving.

Slöjd-carpentry differs from trade-carpentry in the following respects :

1. As to the character of the objects made ; in general the objects are smaller than those made in the trade.

2. The tools which are used ; for instance, the knife, is the most important tool in wood-slöjd—in carpentry it is rarely used.

3. The method of working : in trade-carpentry there is division of labor—in Slöjd none whatever.

Turnery may be taken as a different branch of instruction, and as such be quite well separated from wood-slöjd.

#### V. The number of pupils.

Individual instruction is generally advisable. This is especially the case with Slöjd, which on fundamental and practical grounds cannot be taught as a class subject; therefore the number of pupils taught by one teacher must be limited.

#### VI. The models.

In order to make the instruction as intuitive as possible, models ought to be used in preference to drawings. The form should be sketched either directly, by placing the model on the piece of wood, or by means of a diagram drawn with ruler and compass on the wood.

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In arranging a series of models the following points must be observed :

##### A. AS TO THE CHOICE OF THE MODELS.

1. All articles of luxury are to be excluded.
2. The objects made are to be capable of being used at home.
3. They are to be such objects that the pupils can finish them without any help.
4. They are to be such objects as can be made entirely of wood.
5. The work is not to be polished.
6. As little material as possible is to be used.
7. The pupils are to learn to work both in hard and soft woods.
8. Turnery and carving are to be used as little as possible.
9. The models are to develop the pupils' sense of form and beauty.

In order to attain this, the series must include a number of examples of form, such as spoons, ladles and other curved objects which are suitable for execution by the hand *alone*, guided by the eye.

10. The whole series must be so arranged as to teach the pupils the use of the necessary tools, and to know and carry out all the most important manipulations connected with wood.

## B. AS TO THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE MODELS.

1. The series must progress without break from the easy to the difficult, from the simple to the complex.
2. There must be a refreshing variety.
3. The models must follow in such progressive order that by means of the preceding ones, the pupils may obtain the necessary aptitude to make the following ones without direct help.
4. The models must be so graduated that at every stage the pupil is able to make an exact copy, not merely an approximate one.
5. In making the first models only a small number of tools must be used ; as the work progresses the number of tools and manipulations should gradually increase.
6. At first the knife, as the fundamental tool, should be mostly used.
7. Rather hard woods should generally be used for the first models.
8. At the beginning of the series the models should be capable of being quickly executed, and gradually models which require a longer time should be given.



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